

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /011 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: WCAMPBELL

APPROVED BY: S/S-O: APSHANKLE

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O 081724Z MAR 75 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL ASWAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 052723

LIMDIS TOSEC 170

FOLL REPEAT PHNOM PENH 4172 ACTION SECSTATE 08 MAR 75 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4172

LIMDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINS MILI CB

SUBJECT: ESTIMATE OF GKR SURVIVABILITY

REF: A. STATE 051386

B. PHNOM PENH 4171

1. WITH SUFFICIENT ADDITIONAL MILITARY AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, THE GKR HAS A CHANCE OF GETTING THROUGH THE DRY SEASON. WITHOUT THIS ADDITIONAL MONEY, IT CERTAINLY WILL NOT. I MADE THIS POINT VIGOROUSLY WITH ALL LEGISLATORS WHO HAVE VISITED PHNOM PENH DURING THE LAST WEEK.

2. THE CHANCE OF THE GKR GETTING THROUGH THE DRY SEASON ALSO REQUIRED THE GKR TO RECRUIT REPLACEMENTS TO MAKE UP FOR THEIR HEAVY LOSSES AND FIND WAYS OF REDUCING
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DESERTIONS AND PREVENTING NEW RECRUITS GOING AWOL.

WHILE THE GKR HAS IMPROVED ITS EFFORTS TO FIND RECRUITS, THE NATION CLEARLY IS NOT ON A TOTAL WAR FOOTING DESPITE OUR URGINGS TOWARD THAT END.

3. AS LONG AS POCHENTONG AIRPORT REMAINS OPEN TO TRAFFIC AND SUPPLIES CAN BE BROUGHT IN, THE GKR HAS A CHANCE TO SURVIVE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE FANK IS TRYING TO DISLODGE THE ENEMY FROM THE AREAS FROM WHERE ROCKETS ARE FIRED AT THE AIRPORT; HOWEVER, PROGRESS HAS BEEN SLOW. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE ENEMY IS PUSHING ON THE NORTHERN FRONT OF PHNOM PENH, THEREBY FORCING FANK TO DIVERT SOME RESOURCES FROM THE ROCKET BELT AREA TO FACE THIS ADDITIONAL THREAT. THE LOSS OF THE LAST POSITION (SIERRA 2) BETWEEN NEAK LUONG ON THE MEKONG AND THE VIETNAMESE BORDER HAS POSTPONED THE EARLY OPENING OF THE MEKONG AND MAY FREE SOME ENEMY FORCES WHICH COULD BE HURLED AGAINST THE SOUTHERN PERIMETER OF PHNOM PENH. IF THIS WERE TO OCCUR, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT THREAT TO COUNTER, SINCE FANK HAS NO ADDITIONAL RESERVES IN THE CAPITAL OR IN THE PROVINCES TO SEND TO THE SOUTHERN FRONT.

4. DESPITE ALL THESE "IFS", WITH ADDITIONAL MILITARY AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE THE GKR STANDS A CHANCE TO GET THROUGH THE DRY SEASON, ALTHOUGH SERIOUSLY WEAKENED. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE ENEMY HAS ALSO BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED AND PERHAPS MORE SO THAN THE GKR, WHICH MIGHT MAKE THE ADVERSARY MORE AMENABLE TO ACCEPTING A POLITICAL SOLUTION LATER THIS YEAR RATHER THAN CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS TO IMPOSE HIS WILL BY FORCE. HOWEVER, THE KC ARE SHOWING DURING THE DRY SEASON CONTINUED DETERMINATION TO PRESS THEIR MILITARY MOMENTUM AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE. UNDOUBTEDLY THE KC ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE PUBLIC DEBATE IN THE U.S. WHICH CASTS DOUBT ON THE PROSPECT OF CONTINUED AMERICAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE GKR.

5. MY LONG TERM ASSESSMENT AS TO THE PROSPECTS OF THE GKR HAS NOT CHANGED FROM WHAT THIS MISSION HAS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED DURING THE PAST YEAR: THAT TIME
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IN THE LONG RUN IS NOT ON THE SIDE OF THE GKR. I FULLY AGREE THAT UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION. HOWEVER, ONCE THE DRY SEASON HAS COME TO AN END AND THE GKR EMERGES INTACT, THE WET SEASON MUST BE USED TO FIND A NON-MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY CAPABILITIES, TOSEC 170
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE052723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O: WCAMPBELL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750082-0337
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750368/aaaacjvo.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 051386
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ESTIMATE OF GKR SURVIVABILITY
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, MILI, CB
To: ASWAN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006